

Schools work hard to create pastoral systems that ensure every child or young person is understood. Young people achieve best in their learning when they have stability and feel supported through the changes and challenges of life.

We aim to meet each young person's social and emotional needs as best we can so that they can learn in classrooms staffed by teachers who inspire and challenge all abilities.

'What to do when you don't know what to do' is one of the mantras at St Bernard's. We have tried to develop a culture amongst the students of recognizing when they need help; and being able to identify the help they need from the wide range of academic and pastoral support available in school.

We believe that a skilled counsellor should be an integral part of any effective pastoral care provision. We want to help students address the immediate need to ensure that they continue to access learning; with the aim of achieving their full academic and personal potential.

The service we receive from our BCCS counsellor is highly skilled, professional and effective. Our counsellor is a long established member of the school community; known to the students long before they need help.

Much of her work is of course, with individual students, giving them strategies to manage their temporary or long term barriers to learning. The referral process for this is channeled through one senior member of staff, who also coordinates the links to other external agencies with which we work. They too hold our counsellor in great respect.

Yet our BCCS counsellor does far more. She supports families, trains staff and helps the school identify trends. She is part of the Pastoral Team working alongside: Head of Inclusion; Heads of School, Learning Mentors and the Careers Co-ordinator. She works with us to review and develop our pastoral and academic support systems.

The service is excellent value for money. At a time when school budgets have been under pressure, it has remained one of our essential spends, one that has the full support of the Governors.